



DEFENSE CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE
For Psychological Health & Traumatic Brain Injury



Marriage and Relationship Enhancement Focus Guide

Building Bridges: Supporting the
Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain
Injury Needs of Military and Veteran Families

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What is the Building Bridges to Support the Psychological Health (PH) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Needs of Military and Veteran Families Collaborative Group?

“Building Bridges” is a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary collaborative group whose purpose is to support the PH and TBI needs of military and veteran families by:

- Building community partnerships and networks (e.g., meetings, LISTSERVs, VTCs)
- Enhancing community capacity (especially in National Guard and Reserve communities)
- Developing tools and resources designed to support families. (e.g., focus guides, toolkits, information sheets)

“Building Bridges” is facilitated by the Defense Centers of Excellence for PH and TBI (DCoE), but all group members are actively engaged and are essential to making these projects a success. Members include representatives from:

- DoD Agencies, Services, Reserve and National Guard
- Veterans Affairs, Health and Human Services agencies and other federal partners
- Non-profit organizations and veterans groups
- Academic institutions
- Family members

What is the Purpose of the Marriage Enhancement Focus Guide?

This guide is designed to assist marriage educators, chaplains, health care professionals, social service providers, health and wellness staff and prevention and outreach workers with their work in promoting healthy couple relationships within military and veteran families. The guide pulls together relevant resources and organizes them into what we hope is a user-friendly format for quick reference.

If you would like to make a suggestion for this Focus Guide or wish to join the Building Bridges e-mail LISTSERV for monthly updates, please send an e-mail to: BuildingBridges@tma.osd.mil.

If you need help with information or resources on PH or TBI, please contact the DCoE Outreach Center at 866-966-1020 toll-free or send an e-mail inquiry to Resources@DCoEOutreach.org.

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I. GENERAL INFORMATION FOR EDUCATORS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

A. ACHIEVING SUCCESS IN MARRIAGE AND RELATIONSHIP ENHANCEMENT CLASSES

Tools for Program Success

Characteristics of Successful Marriage Educators

This document explains some key characteristics of successful marriage educators who possess the following skills or traits: ability to manage group dynamics and support the mission; commitment and dependability; energy and engaging manner; focus on education and empowerment; hope; knowledge of the audience; knowledge about community resources; respect for boundaries; self awareness; knowledge of adult learning models and humility.

Source: Robredo, K. (2007). Characteristics of Successful Marriage Educators. *National Marriage Resource Center*. Retrieved from www.healthymarriageinfo.org.

Operational Issues for Marriage Education Programs

This document provides information on the logistics of workshop delivery, such as scheduling, transportation, childcare, choice of location, marketing, preparedness (e.g., materials and equipment set up) and breaks and refreshments.

Effective Facilitation: Tips for Improving Skills and Engaging Audiences

Principles for effective facilitation include: engaging the audience, understanding learning and group dynamics and competency in the subject matter. Key points in effective facilitation include:

- Make a good first impression
- Be a good listener
- Encourage an atmosphere of acceptance and mutual respect for group members
- Know your audience
- Be prepared and organized
- Ensure that the physical environment is conducive to participation
- Be yourself
- Use “icebreakers” to help participants get to know each other and to create a fun atmosphere
- Use specific experiential exercises to build group cohesion and to illustrate important ideas and concepts
- Recognize learning takes place on two levels: cognitive and affective
- Be knowledgeable about adult learning

- Have an array of video-clips from movies and TV to illustrate concepts (and to give facilitators a break!)
- Understand the importance of nonverbal communication
- Be prepared to deal with difficult people
- Start and end each session with an opportunity for people to share what they learned or how they have used the skills

Program Management and Evaluation

- [Presentation: Use of Logic Models to Monitor and Refine Healthy Marriage Projects](#)
- [Strategic Management — Developing a Working Logic Model at Administration for Children and Families' \(ACF's\) Healthy Marriage Grantee Training and Technical Assistance](#)

Marriage Education Curriculum Assessment Guide

[ACF's Healthy Marriage Initiative](#)

This document assists marriage educators with selecting a curriculum using an assessment guide that will help in selecting the most appropriate one for the couples and individuals that will be served. NOTE: This document is a DRAFT for informational purposes only.

Promoting Safety — Responding to Domestic Violence Issues within a Marriage Education Program

The guides listed below have been developed for relationship and marriage educators and program administrators to help them understand and respond to domestic violence issues that may arise within their programs.

- [Introduction to Guides](#)
- [Understanding Domestic Violence: Definitions, Impact, Scope and Response](#)
- [Building Effective Partnerships with Domestic Violence Programs](#)
- [Developing Domestic Violence Protocols](#)
- [Screening and Assessment for Domestic Violence: Attending to Safety and Culture](#)
- [After Disclosure: Responding to Domestic Violence](#)

B. TRAINING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

Webinars/Videos

- [Webinars and Supporting Materials](#)
- [“Reaching Out to Military Couples” –PowerPoint/Webinar September 2008](#)
 - [Transcript](#)

C. ARTICLES AND RESEARCH

Articles

[Military Service and Marriage: A Review of Research](#)

This extensive summary of research on marriage and military service covers topics that include: marriage and military retention and career orientation; dual-military marriages; women in the military; deployment; prisoners of war; the effects of combat on marriage; potential relationship problems in military marriages; spousal abuse and aggression; divorce rates; and premarital counseling. The studies reviewed here pertain to military service in World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and more recent military conflicts, as well as to general military service. A great deal of research about military service and marriage relates to deployment, a timely topic given current military conflicts.

[Dissemination and Evaluation of Marriage Education in the Military](#)

Source: Family Process, Volume 44, Issue 2, pages 187-201. Scott M. Stanley, Elizabeth S. Allen, Howard J. Markman, Christopher C. Saiz, Glen Bloomstrom, Ronald Thomas, Walter R. Schumm and Albert E. Bailey.

[Using Marriage Education to Strengthen Military Families: Lessons from the Active Military Life Skills Program](#)

Source: Presented at the North American Association of Christians in Social Work Convention 2007.

[A Comprehensive Framework for Marriage Education](#)

Source: Administration for Children and Families. Alan J. Hawkins, Jason S. Carroll, William J. Doherty and Brian Wolloughby.

[Findings on Marriage Education](#)

Source: California Healthy Marriages Coalition.

[Predictors of Success and Failure in Marriage](#)

Source: www.dibbleinstitute.org. Barbara Defoe Whitehead.

[Reason Skills-based Marriage Programs Work](#)

Source: www.smartmarriages.com

[Marriage Education in the Workplace](#)

Source: Journal of Employee Assistance, 3rd Quarter 2006. Howard Markman, Jack Myrick and Marcie Pregulman.

[Link to articles from MarriageEd.org](#)

[Links to articles from PREPinc.com](#)

Marriage Reports/Statistics/Research Summaries

[SmartMarriages.com Marriage Reports](#)

[Penn State Population Research Institute: Marital Instability over the Life Course](#)

The Marital Instability Over the Life Course Study, also referred to as the Work and Family Life Study, is one of the longest-running national studies of marriage in existence and the only one with detailed information on marital quality and interaction. The study comprises six waves of data spanning 20 years.

Newsletters

[Connections Newsletters](#)

For marriage educators; multiple issues of newsletter to include:

[Top 10 Behaviors of Deployment Families](#) (Issue 3: November 2004)

Academic, State and Federal Research Initiatives

[The National Marriage Resource Center](#)

The National Healthy Marriage Resource Center is a national resource and clearinghouse for information and research relating to healthy marriages. We strive to be a "first stop shop" for marriage and family trends and statistics, marriage education and programming, scholarly research and the latest news and events. In particular, the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center also provides training and technical assistance presentations and documents for federally funded Healthy Marriage Initiative grantees. The National Healthy Marriage Resource Center supports the [Administration for Children and Families](#), furthering its commitment to promote and support healthy marriages and child well-being by providing research and program information and generating new knowledge about promising and effective strategies.

[The National Center for Marriage Research](#)

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has established the first-ever National Center for Marriage Research through a cooperative agreement with Bowling Green State University. The National Center for Marriage Research aims to improve our understanding of how marriage and family structure affect the health and well-being of individuals, families, children and communities and informs policy development and programmatic responses. In addition to supporting

interdisciplinary research on marriage and family structure, the National Center for Marriage Research is developing research capacity and widely disseminating findings.

[The Oklahoma Marriage Initiative](#)

The Oklahoma Marriage Initiative is a public/private partnership dedicated to helping couples gain access to services and supports to improve their marriage and relationship, with the ultimate goal of increasing child well-being. [Marriage Statistics research.](#)

[The Relationship Research Institute](#)

The Relationship Research Institute was created to foster research on marriage, couples, parenting and families. Dr. John Gottman created this research institute as a means of advancing an ambitious and independent research agenda and to assure that there would be a place dedicated to sponsoring research that is of the highest scientific rigor.

[National Extension Relationship and Marriage Education Network](#)

The network offers various curricula and professional development resources to support the development and maintenance of healthy couple and marital relationships for diverse audiences.

[Stronger Families \(formerly known as Families Northwest\)](#)

[Operation Military Family Program](#)

- [Watch video clip](#)
- [Subscribe to a Military Family Newsletter](#)

[Family Life — Military Marriages](#)

Family Life is a Christian organization helping couples build healthier marriages and families.

[Boone Center for the Family at Pepperdine University](#)

The Marriage Initiative at the Boone Center for the Family strives to strengthen and renew hope in marriages.

- [What is the Marriage Initiative?](#) The Marriage Initiative strengthens and renews marital quality through intensives, education and resource speakers.
- [Online articles for couples](#)

[The Center for Marital and Family Studies at University of Denver](#)

The center is the home for studies in three broad categories:

- Building knowledge of risk and protective factors for marital distress and divorce
- Development of knowledge on the effectiveness of marriage/relationship education, including knowledge of the internationally known Prevention and Relationships Enhancement Program (PREP); and
- The study of couple development, including a strong focus on commitment dynamics and cohabitation.

The center is currently home for four large, federally supported studies. Three of these are large, randomized effectiveness trials of relationship education and one is a study of relationship development (and cohabitation dynamics) using a large, longitudinal, national sample of couples at key developmental stages. (See [Current Studies](#) for details.)

Cultural Initiatives

[The African-American Healthy Marriage Initiative](#)

The mission of the African-American Healthy Marriage Initiative is to promote and strengthen the institution of healthy marriage in the African-American community. Roundtable Report: On August 1, 2003 in Washington, DC, a select group of professionals from a variety of disciplines and institutions serving the Black community convened a historical roundtable discussion of the African-American Healthy Marriage Initiative. The roundtable brought together 25 influential individuals to discuss the current culture/state of marriage in the Black community and why marriage matters.

[Hispanic Healthy Marriage Initiative](#)

The purpose of the Administration for Children and Families Healthy Marriage Initiative is to improve child well-being by providing those who choose marriage for themselves with increased access to marriage education. Recognizing the research that indicates that two-parent, married families represent the ideal environment for raising children, Congress included marriage, family formation and fatherhood as key elements in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. The Hispanic Healthy Marriage Initiative is a focused strategy within the Healthy Marriage Initiative. The goal of the Hispanic Healthy Marriage Initiative is to address the unique cultural, linguistic, demographic and socio-economic needs of children and families in Hispanic communities.

II. OVERVIEWS OF RELATIONSHIP ENHANCEMENT EDUCATION CURRICULA AND TRAINING

D. MILITARY-SPECIFIC SUPPORTIVE INTERVENTIONS

[Military Family Life Consultants](#)

Military Family Life Consultants are masters or Ph.D. level, licensed and credentialed clinical providers that offer intervention and support to military members and their families. Like Military OneSource, they provide non-medical, short-term counseling for every day issues, such as anger management, stress, parenting, communication, family relationships, deployment and other military-related topics. The goal of the program is to support operational readiness and family readiness. Situations requiring mental health treatment are referred to behavioral health agencies that treat these conditions.

Military Family Life Consultants can be accessed through installation locations such as the Army Community Services, Marine Corps Community Services, Navy Fleet and Family Support Centers and the Airman and Family Readiness Centers. Military Family Life Consultants will also provide support at National Guard and Reserve component drill weekends, mobilizations and family events. National Guard and Reserve component members and their families can call 800-342-9647 to speak with a consultant and be connected with a Military Family Life Consultant in their community.

E. MILITARY-SPECIFIC RELATIONSHIP ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMS

Army Strong Bonds

Strong Bonds empowers soldiers and their loved ones with relationship-building skills and connects them to community health and support resources. There are specialized programs for couples, single soldiers and families. It is a holistic, preventative program committed to the restoration and preservation of Army families, even those near crisis. The program is initiated and led by the Army Chaplains. More than 90 percent of those who have attended the program rate it positively.

Navy Chaplains Religious Enrichment Development Operation (CREDO)

CREDO's mission is to provide appropriate programs of ministry to enable military personnel, their families and other authorized personnel to develop personal and spiritual resources and grow toward increased functional ability, religious maturity and acceptance of responsibility. CREDO includes the following programs: Personal Growth Retreat, Marriage Enrichment Retreat, Spirituality Retreat, Men's Retreat, Women's Retreat and others.

Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP)

Marine Corps Family Team Building staff and Chaplains have teamed up to offer this program, which focuses on communications skills and problem resolution strategies. The workshop and the materials teach couples the skills they need to nurture a lasting love. Couples spend most of their time in special discussions or practicing skills. Key topics include expectations, commitment, fun, forgiveness, friendship, feeling understood and sensuality.

Air Force Marriage Care

The Air Force Chaplain Corps marriage retreat program Marriage Care is a relatively new program. For more information, contact: Chaplain, Major James Glass at james.glass@pentagon.af.mil or call 202-767-4586 or 202-767-4577.

Active Military

Created in collaboration with military communities, this 8-16 hour skills program addresses adventures of military life including deployments and reintegration. Active Military also referred to as "Better than Best Friends Forever," provides tools to build resilience and to build strong healthy bonds. It is often offered in a retreat format.

- Meets all Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families "Marriage Education Requirements"
- Approved curriculum of Army Strong Bonds program
- Research provided from military couples by Baylor University
- Secular and Christian editions are available

- Leaders choose format (day-long, two half days or weekly sessions).
- Used in U.S. Army, (Korea, Europe, mainland U.S.) and U.S. Air Force, (USAFE, PACAF and mainland U.S.)
- 2003 pilot program began with Chaplains in U.S. Army at Fort Sam Houston.

Programs are for single service members, military couples and families, and officers/Chaplains.
Content topics are:

- Resilience and Readiness
- Communication Styles
- Timing Successful Communication
- Emotions and Your Body
- Planning to Manage Emotional Upsets
- Normal Challenges of Posttraumatic Stress
- Getting Rid of Destructive Behaviors
- Depression and Family Safety
- The Difference Between Healthy Anger and Abuse
- Compassion and Forgiveness Helps YOU
- Being Real in Families
- Money Styles, Roles and Responsibilities
- S.M.A.R.T. Resolution Skills
- S.M.A.R.T. Peer Practice
- Predictors of Relationship Satisfaction
- The Biology of Love
- What to Expect in Marriage
- Little Ideas for Staying Close

F. CURRICULA (GENERAL)

Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP)

PREP is a skills-based and principles-building curriculum designed to help partners increase their positive connections. It is education, not therapy.

- [PREP's Research Foundation](#)
- [Research and References](#)
- [Instructor Training Calendar](#)
- [PREP and Domestic Violence \(statement\)](#)

Marital Assessment Profile (MAP)

Contact Information: Dr. Gary L. Bowen: glbowen@email.unc.edu

MAP is a support program for marital couples. The program is highly structured and goal-directed and is divided into four parts: 1) Getting acquainted and the Value-Behavior Congruency Model; 2) Values and Value-Behavior Congruency in Marriage; 3) Personal and Relational Resources and Barriers and Organizational Culture; 4) Coping with Value-Behavior Incongruity and a plan of action.

Navigating the Marital Journey by Dr. Gary Bowen presents a field-tested support program known as MAP for employees and their spouses. Developed in consultation with the Army Office of the Chief of Chaplains, this program is designed to help spouses implement systematic change toward individual and collective goals. Specific to the work environment, MAP aims to promote a more productive and successful relationship between the employment and marital spheres. Using the tenets of family values, this program espouses the Value-Behavior Congruency Model. The book uses this empirically based model to implement the program in today's work environment. Data were collected from 48 married couples in the Army, as well as 34 couples from a Fortune 500 company. This book successfully integrates theory, research and practice and is useful for managers and human resource professionals alike.

Sources:

- Bowen, G. L. *Navigating the marital journey: MAP, A corporate support program for couples*. 1991. New York: Praeger.
- [Family Life Satisfaction: A Value-Based Approach](#) Author(s): Gary L. Bowen Source: Family Relations, Vol. 37, No. 4, The Contemporary Family: Consequences of Change (Oct., 1988), pp. 458-462 Published by: National Council on Family Relations

The Council on Prevention and Education: Substances, Inc ([COPES](#)) and [Healthy Marriages](#) COPES received national recognition in 1989 when it was chosen as one of 16 exemplary prevention programs by the Office for Substance Abuse Prevention, the National Prevention Network and the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors. The following year, COPES was awarded a five-year federal demonstration grant from the Office of Substance Abuse Prevention for implementing its [Creating Lasting Connections](#) program. Ecumenical and community-based in design, this program focused on increasing community, family and personal resiliency factors which reduce the likelihood that 12-14 year old youths at risk will abuse alcohol and other drugs or engage in other delinquent, violent or uncontrolled behaviors. Presented in its entirety, [Creating Lasting Connections](#) imparts to parents and youth knowledge and understanding about the use, abuse and dependency on tobacco, alcohol and other drugs; improves communication and conflict resolution skills; builds refusal skills to resist negative social influences; and engenders self-knowledge, personal responsibility and respect for others.

[Prepare-Enrich/Life Innovations](#)

Life Innovations began in 1980 as a result of several research projects at the University of Minnesota in which Dr. David Olson developed a set of inventories for couples; known as [Prepare/Enrich](#). Because of the demand for the inventories, Dr. Olson formed Prepare/Enrich (now called Life Innovations) to provide helpful tools to counselors, clergy members, mentors and other marriage educators.

[PAIRS \(Practical Application of Intimate Relationship Skills\)](#)

The PAIRS programs, developed by Lori H. Gordon, Ph.D., provide a comprehensive system to enhance self-knowledge and to develop the ability to sustain pleasurable intimate relationships. Gordon's approach integrates a wide range of theories and methods from psychology, education and psychotherapy and presents them in an educational format. PAIRS acts to bridge therapy, marital enrichment and marriage and family development.

- Courses and Workshops - PAIRS offers programs to the public led by PAIRS Trained Professionals (PTP) (licensed health care professionals) and PAIRS Instructors (certified clergy and educators), trained under the auspices and supervision of Gordon and the PAIRS Foundation, the organization that officially oversees PAIRS programs, products and licensing worldwide. There are PTPs and facilitators around the world. Check ["Finding an Educator"](#) to find one near you or near one you love who may need PAIRS.
- PAIRS is effective across a variety of populations. PAIRS has relationship skills training programs for children and youth, PAIRS for PEERS, that are taught in schools, churches and agencies. PAIRS has programs for the Military, for use by chaplains and family service workers. PAIRS has faith-based programs for the Jewish, Catholic and Christian church communities. PAIRS is currently developing programs and program delivery systems for disadvantaged youth, unmarried families, single parents, domestic violence, prison parolees and related groups who can benefit from relationship skills training. PAIRS provides a vital ingredient to build stable marriages and healthy families with more hopeful futures for children. These programs for special groups will be taught by

local agency workers and by specially trained community teachers and mentors. [Research on PAIRS](#) has demonstrated that PAIRS works for all groups under all circumstances evaluated. PAIRS is a modern technology adapted to our rapidly changing society in behalf of creating a saner, safer, more loving world.

[Couples Communication](#)

To date over 700,000 couples worldwide have taken the COUPLE COMMUNICATION program since its development at the University of Minnesota Family Study Center. With over 70 studies, COUPLE COMMUNICATION is the most independently researched marriage program available today with positive results.

[Mastering the Mysteries of Love and Love's Cradle](#)

Healthy Marriage Initiatives (HMI's) across the country are bringing relationship skills to couples through the MML Series of Relationship Enhancement programs. Many of these HMI's are partially funded through federal grants through ACF's Building Strong Families, or Community Healthy Marriage Initiative, or Fatherhood projects. Some are funded through ORR's Refugee Healthy Marriage Initiatives. Many efforts are funded by the people in communities who see the value of strengthening marriage and supporting commitment of parents to their children. The MML Series of programs (Mastering the Mysteries of Love, Love's Cradle, Ready for Love) provides an inexpensive, effective, comprehensive program for HMI's. A train-the-trainer self-sufficiency model enables a community to be self-sufficient (providing their own leadership training) within a year of first teaching MML.

[Lifechangers](#)

Lifechangers is dedicated to building and strengthening relationships before and after marriage. The heart of a vibrant relationship is a strong bond of love. You will find that the Relationship Attachment Model (RAM) provides a picture of love and closeness. When you understand what produces the feelings of love in your relationship and how these dynamics work together, then you can manage your relationship--healing hurts and deepening intimacy.

- Two programs use the RAM-- the first is the [PICK a Partner Program](#) (a.k.a. How To Avoid Marrying A Jerk) which teaches a way to build a healthy relationship that keeps the head and heart working together. This program is designed to provide singles with a plan for pacing a relationship and exploring the key areas that foreshadow what that partner will be like in marriage.
- The [Marriage LINKS](#) Program teaches couples how to be active relationship managers and work together to keep their relationship strong and resilient. This program also uses the RAM to help couples visualize their feelings of closeness and intimacy. It provides a format for you to monthly review your relationship and make sure that you are balancing your time, communication and togetherness in mutually enjoyable ways. Check out the Pre- and Post-Deployment versions of the LINKS program with pre or post LINKS workbooks for military couples. The video recording of the 2007 Denver Smart Marriage Conference opening keynote presentation, Lessons from the Front: Using the LINKS Program with Military Couples--can be viewed in its entirety.

[Research Article](#): “The Effectiveness of a Premarital Education Program on Single U.S. Army Soldiers: Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge (P.I.C.K.) Program.” Two

[National Institute of Relationship Enhancement](#)

The National Institute of Relationship Enhancement® (NIRE), a non-profit educational corporation, was founded by [Bernard Guerney, Jr., Ph.D.](#) in 1992 as a branch of its parent organization the Institute for the Development of Emotional and Life Skills (IDEALS), which Dr. Guerney had previously founded in 1972. The mission of NIRE is to contribute to the advancement of honesty, compassion and understanding in relationships by developing, teaching and disseminating relationship enhancement skills for the benefit of the individual, the family, the community and the workplace.

G. CURRICULA BY AUDIENCE

Each of the following links has information to numerous marriage and relationship enhancement programs. They may or may not be evidence-based, but allow for a search based on the status of the couple or individual (e.g., engaged, married, etc.)

[Curricula for Engaged Couples – Brief Descriptions](#)

[Curricula for Married Couples – Brief Descriptions](#)

[Curricula for Singles or Individuals – Brief Descriptions](#)

[Curricula for Young Adults or Youth – Brief Descriptions](#)

III. EDUCATIONAL HANDOUTS AND INFORMATION FOR COUPLES

H. GENERAL EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION FOR COUPLES

MilitaryOnesource.com

Resources for couples (articles, booklets and recordings, resource guides, audios, quick tips, web links.)

Couple Talk: Enhancing Your Relationship

An Informal Study Course from Kansas State University. [Full document \(20 pages\)](#)

Here is an excerpt from this 20 page guide for couples: “Couple Talk emphasizes skill-building. It also stresses a process of growth and behavior change to help the relationship become stronger and more satisfying to both of you. The process is *risky* and it takes time. It requires partners to reveal more of themselves and accept what their mates are revealing. This type of structured program for enriching your relationship may provide encouragement when you get busy or feel a little afraid—or when you are tempted to quit the relationship. This booklet contains six lessons. The accompanying activities help you learn and practice skills. You may want to spend one week on each lesson and its suggested activities, or you may want to create your own timetable. It is helpful to set aside a certain time each day to focus on Couple Talk. Try to avoid distractions. Make it prime time, not left-over time.”

- [Teaching Guide for Relationship Educators](#)

I. EDUCATIONAL HANDOUTS FOR COUPLES

[Preparing Your Marriage for a Military Deployment](#)

Information on how to cope with deployment stressors that affect the marriage that include dealing with feelings of fear, anger and anxiety.

[Qualities of a Healthy Relationship](#)

Source: [Family Bridges](#), www.twoofus.org.

[How to Know if You Have a Healthy Marriage](#)

Source: www.healthymarriageinfo.org.

[How to Combine Your Lives Without Losing Your Identity](#)

Source: www.twoofus.org.

[Maintaining Friendships After Marriage](#)

Offers tips on maintaining friendships after marriage to include: 1) set boundaries; 2) make time; 3) give and take; and 4) make new friends.

Source: www.twoofus.org.

[Can You Really Change a Person?](#)

Explains the challenges of living with someone who has a habit or habits you find annoying and instead of looking to them to change, looking inward at your reasons for wanting them to change. If change is needed, advises modeling the willingness to change. But also says that individuals must understand that their good influence or support may not be enough. Couples in which one partner is dealing with depression, alcoholism, or other major issues should seek outside help to change.

Source: www.twoofus.org.

[Learning Languages of Love in Marriage](#)

Describes love as a willingness to commit; and a willingness to adapt and cooperate with another person. Also describes how the process of loving is one of the most rewarding things a person can do.

Source: [University of Arkansas](#).

[Reconnecting with Your Spouse](#)

Provides information on ways to re-connect with your spouse when you've been married for years and have grown distant.

Source: www.twoofus.org.

[Ho-Hum Marriages](#)

Describes how after the first couple of years of a marriage, couples often see what they didn't see before and get upset over little things. This makes them consider leaving the relationship. However, even the healthiest marriages have "ho-hum" phases and you can feel the spark again.

Source: [First Things First](#).

[Avoiding Communication Fouls](#)

Discusses some communication patterns that are problematic to include criticism, sarcasm and cynicism, counterattacking and giving the "silent treatment."

Source: www.twoofus.org.

[Fighting in a Way That's Fair](#)

Provides information on handling conflict in a fair manner.

Source: [Alabama Community Healthy Marriage Initiative](#).

[Listening is Not a Spectator Sport –Rules for Active Listening](#)

Explains rules for active listening to include: 1) Listen; 2) Stop, Pause, Replay; 3) Replay, Not-Re-butt; and 4) the Art of Understanding.

Source: www.twoofus.org.

[Honey, Did You Hear Me? A Game Plan for Effective Communication](#)

Describes a positive approach to communication that understands people come from different backgrounds, experiences and personalities; provides tips on how to approach communication. Also describes methods for handling emotionally charged situations.

Source: www.twoofus.org.

[Start Soft When You Want To Be Heard](#)

Provides rules from John Gottman, Ph.D. for handling arguments.

Source: [Alabama Community Healthy Marriage Initiative](#).

[Dealing with Anger in Marriage](#)

Explains misconceptions about anger; how people cover up anger; how anger can be healthy in and how anger can be resolved.

Source: [Ohio State University](#).

[Dealing With Conflict in Marriage](#)

Source: [University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture](#).

[Toxic Subjects for Couples](#)

Explains the six most common toxic subjects for couples: money, sex, jealousy over time spent outside the marriage, in-laws, child rearing and spirituality/faith. Gives tips on handling these topics.

Source: [First Things First](#).

[How to Ride Out the Storm and Recession-Proof Your Relationship](#)

Source: www.twoofus.org.

Depression and Marriage

Source: www.healthymarriageinfo.org.

Emotional Cheating

Explains how emotional infidelity can be as devastating to a marriage as a sexual encounter and how to determine the difference between harmless flirting vs. cheating.

Source: Suite101.com.

Getting Past Problems to Solutions in Marriage

Source: University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture.

How Stress Affects a Relationship

Source: www.healthymarriageinfo.org.

Strategies for Couples Dealing with Financial Strain

Source: www.healthymarriageinfo.org.

10 Things You Can Do to Romance Your Partner on a Budget

Source: www.healthymarriageinfo.org.

Tips for Sustaining a Healthy Marriage in Families with Children with Special Needs

Source: www.healthymarriageinfo.org.

Seven Principles of Making Marriage Work

Source: Gottman, John M. and Nan Silver. (1999). How I predict divorce,” in The Seven Principles for Making Marriages Work (Chapter Two, 25-46). New York: Three Rivers Press (Random House, Inc.)

Healing from Infidelity

Source: www.divorcebusting.com, by Michele Weiner-Davis.

Why Should I Be the One to Change?

Source: www.divorcebusting.com, by Michele Weiner-Davis.

Where Were You When I Needed You?

Source: www.divorcebusting.com, by Michele Weiner-Davis.

Forgiveness is a Gift You Give Yourself

Source: www.divorcebusting.com, by Michele Weiner-Davis.

Marital Distress

Source: [American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy](#).

Improving Sexual Communication in a Marriage

Source: 2000 BYU Families Under Fire Conference.

Sexual Addiction

Source: [American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy](#).

Chronic Illness

Source: [American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy](#).

Substance Abuse and Intimate Relationships

Source: [American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy](#).

Effect of Anger on Families

Source: [American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy](#).

J. WEB SITES WITH COUPLES EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

Marriage Skills

Multiple areas on Web site to include tips from experts, Q&A, articles, discussion board, podcasts, videos and much more.

Source: <http://twoofus.org/married/marriage-skills/index.aspx>.

Marriage and the Military

Multiple articles and other resources.

Source: <http://twoofus.org/married/marriage-and-the-military/index.aspx>.

MilitaryOneSource

Dating

Healthy dating relationships. Includes expert's tips; Q&A; articles; discussion board and much more.

Source: www.twoofus.org.

Family Life - Military Marriages

Family Life is a Christian organization helping couples build healthier marriages and families.

Source: www.familylife.com.

K. PODCASTS

[Addressing Relationship Energy Drainers](#)

Running time: 1 hour 3 min (1:03:00)

Whether you have a penchant for attracting energy-draining individuals or you experience energy-draining only occasionally, you'll appreciate having readily-available tools for dealing with this all-too-common relationship challenge. Learn to recognize when your energy is being drained and what you can do about it.

Source: www.RealRelationships.com

[Overcoming the Core Beliefs that Cause Relationship Failures](#)

Running time: 43 min 13 sec (43:13)

It's not what you consciously think that determines the quality of your relationships, but what you subconsciously believe. Learn from this podcast how, until you are able to observe the hidden thoughts, beliefs and feelings that occupy your subconscious mind and learn to change them, you are destined to continue repeating the same patterns in your relationships.

Source: www.relationshipcoachinginstitute.com

[Is This Relationship Right for Me?](#)

Running time: 55 min 11 sec

Learn through this podcast what commitment is in today's world and how to use the pre-commitment stage to prevent unnecessary divorce, including the largely unrecognized phenomenon of "Pre-Commitment" when singles become couples.

Source: www.relationshipcoachinginstitute.com

[Am I Ready To Be a Couple?](#)

Running time: 55 min 12 sec

The switch from single to couple can happen too quickly sometimes. Learn how and when to make the conscious decision to go from "ME" to "WE" and learn what it takes to prepare yourself for everlasting love.

Source: www.relationshipcoachinginstitute.com

[Emotional Mastery: The Secret to Incredible Relating](#)

Running time: 1 hr 42 min

Learn this cutting-edge information on the role of emotions in your life and relationships and become the master of your emotions that you are intended to be.

Source: www.relationshipcoachinginstitute.com

[Dealing with our Baggage](#)

Running time: 1 hr 8 min

Learn how to become aware of our relationship history and patterns and how they impact our current relationships. Learn how our past can help us to discover our Vision, Purpose, Requirements, Needs and Wants; Source: www.relationshipcoachinginstitute.com

[Deciding Is This The One?](#)

Running time: 1 hr 36 min

The goal of this podcast is to learn how to identify relationship red flags and dangers and provide you with the information to decide if this is the right relationship for you.

Source: www.relationshipcoachinginstitute.com

[Finding Lasting Love By Experiencing Your Experience](#)

Running time: 1 hr 15 min

In this program, you will learn how we let go of needing perfection without settling for less than what we really want, while using our past experiences to guide us in a pre-committed relationship.

Source: www.relationshipcoachinginstitute.com

L. VIDEOS FOR COUPLES

[How to Argue Correctly](#)

Running time—1 min 41 sec (1:41)

In this video, Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott explain a useful technique that couples can use to argue and communicate effectively. They talk about how using “I statements” instead of “you statements” can protect partners from criticizing one another.

Source: www.RealRelationships.com

[Can This Marriage Be Saved?](#)

Running time—2 min 54 sec (2:54)

In this video, Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott discuss how, more than anything, women crave emotional closeness in their relationship. However, men and women may have different ways of achieving emotional closeness. Men, for example, tend to connect through shared activities. Small changes toward strengthening the emotional bond with your partner can make a significant difference in your relationship.

Source: www.RealRelationships.com

[Opposite Sex Friends](#)

Running time—1min 44 sec

In this video, Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott discuss how to balance the intimacy in a marriage with other important friendships, citing that partners must decide where to focus their energy and, above all, protect the marriage relationship.

Source: www.RealRelationships.com

[Facing Infidelity in Your Marriage](#)

Running time—3 min 23 sec

In this video, Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott talk about how infidelity can hurt a relationship and the process couples must go through to begin the healing process, such as taking ownership for the state of the relationship, seeking out a mentoring couple or counselor and allowing yourself to experience the emotions involved in the grieving process.

Source: www.RealRelationships.com

[Losing Trust in Your Spouse](#)

Running time—2 min 40 sec

In this video, Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott discuss the process couples must go through in order to rebuild trust in their relationship. Rebuilding trust take patience and time, much like rebuilding a physical structure after damage has been done. There is work on both sides that must occur; the person who was betrayed must be willing to forgive and must be open and honest about their anxieties, while the betrayer has to be open and willing to answer questions and be held accountable.

Source: www.RealRelationships.com

[Finding Couple Time as Parents](#)

Running time—2 min 42 sec

In this video, Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott talk about the hectic schedule of modern-day parents. Too often, couples with children find it harder and harder to carve out or set aside time to focus on one another and their relationship. Parents need to find a way to reevaluate where they are spending their time, reclaim misspent time and refocus that time toward being together and working on their relationship.

Source: www.RealRelationships.com

[Seven Magic Moves for Relationship Harmony](#)

Source: <http://www.hendricks.com/7magicmoves/>